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SUBJECT: CZECHS ON EU-TURKEY DIALOGUE

Classified By: Pol-Econ Counselor Mike Dodman for reasons 1.4 b+d

¶1. (C) PolCouns met December 4 with Czech MFA Director General of the European Union Section Libor Secka to discuss Czech views on Turkey-EU negotiations over coming days. Secka emphasized that the Czech Republic strongly supports continued negotiations with Turkey; this stance had been confirmed in a meeting with PM Topolanek earlier in the day. In terms of an EU decision next week, he said the GOCR hopes that any restrictions on future negotiations be limited to technical chapters, since the ports issue is a technical one. But Secka also said the Czechs believe that the Turks must make some "gesture" that they and like-minded EU members (and the Presidency) can use to win over hard-liners in the coming days.

¶2. (C) Secka said that PM Topolanek had made this point directly to the Turks during last week's visit to Prague by Turkey's Chief EU Negotiator Ali Babacan. Babacan replied that he had "limited space for flexibility." Secka said that he did not yet have a readout on the Finnish Prime Minister's recent visit to Ankara, where he expected this idea would be discussed further. But he stressed to PolCouns that he thought it would be important for the USG to reinforce this message in Ankara.

MUNTER